

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 18, 2016

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment & Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment & Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:


As you consider spending for the 2017 Interior and Environment appropriations bill, we respectfully request that the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies increase funding for the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) by \$18,672,750, or 25 percent above the President's request, which would set the total ATSDR funding level at \$93,363,750.

A number of incidents early in 2016--from the lead water pollution in Flint, Michigan, to arsenic and cadmium air pollution found in Portland, Oregon--have reminded us that dangerous environmental health concerns exist across America. Whether from air or water, exposure to environmental toxins like lead, arsenic, and cadmium can cause cancer, neurological disorders and other serious health impairments. Furthermore, these pollutants interact in the environment in complex ways that can make it difficult to determine toxic exposure and the associated public health consequences. ATSDR addresses this challenge by providing expert investigation and response to public health emergencies associated with incidents of localized toxic contamination.

More than ever, we need to robustly fund this Agency. Increased funding for ATSDR will provide necessary support for the scientific and programmatic capabilities that safeguard human health, in all our communities across America. We appreciate your consideration of our request and look forward to working with you to protect public health and promote environmental safety.

Sincerely,

  
Ron Wyden  
United States Senator

  
Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator